United Nations S/2000/596

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 June 2000

Original: English

Letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement detailing the chronology of events and the repeated violations of the ceasefire in Kisangani by the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) (see annex). The Government of Uganda totally rejects the allegations levelled at the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and wishes to assure the international community of its commitment to the Lusaka peace process.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex published as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Prof. Semakula **Kiwanuka** Ph.D.
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations

00-48566 (E) 200600

Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Kisangani clashes

Introduction

1. Uganda's stated position on Congo has always been that the Congo question has two dimensions, namely:

(a) The legitimate security concerns of the neighbours of Congo;

(b) The internal Congolese crisis.

2. The security concerns of neighbours can be best resolved by both the Congolese and the region, supported by the international community, and it is for this reason that we worked for and still support Lusaka.

3. The internal Congolese questions is to be resolved by the Congolese themselves also within the framework of Lusaka.

Issue of repeated clashes between UPDF and RPA in Kisangani

4. UPDF and RPA have clashed three times in Kisangani: in August 1999, in May 2000 and in June 2000. The underlying causes of these unjustified and unfortunate clashes are outlined below.

Kisangani I

5. The causes of Kisangani I can be traced to the following:

(a) There was a split in the rebellion (Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD)) in May 1999 which effectively resulted in the creation of two RCDs: RCD Kisangani, supported by Uganda, and RCD (Goma), supported by Rwanda;

(b) This split even translated into the question of who was to append signature to the Lusaka Agreement on behalf of RCD. The Governments signed the Agreement on 10 July 1999, while the leaders of the rebellion signed much later, at the end of August, owing to the disagreements cited above;

(c) Kisangani I was a clear attempt by RPA and its RCD (Goma) allies to stop the verification process sanctioned by the region to establish whether RCD Kisangani existed independent of RCD (Goma) with separate political and military structures, and political support/following in the liberated territories;

(d) Therefore, the attack on UPDF by RPA was a clear indication of the level of commitment of either the Army or the Government to Lusaka, that is Uganda/UPDF was strongly committed to Lusaka and its implementation, while Rwanda/RPA was not and would do anything to obstruct it;

(e) The causes of Kisangani I were not conclusively resolved because of RPA disinterest in further thorough investigations, claiming that the inconclusive, preliminary Jeje-Kayumba report was satisfactory;

(f) UPDF, however, maintained that this report was inconclusive and required to be revisited because some key people had not been interviewed by the committee, such as Presidents Museveni and Kagame, Minister Zuma of South Africa, Minister Silwamba of Zambia, Minister Mazimpaka of Rwanda, Hon. Otafire, the late Lt. Col. Ikondere and civilians who witnessed what took place during Kisangani I and whose testimony would have been material to the conclusions;

(g) That notwithstanding, the leadership of both countries agreed in Mweya to sectorize Kisangani into two zones corresponding to the operational areas of both armies: UPDF was to be in charge of the north and east of Kisangani, while RPA was to control the south and west of Kisangani.

Kisangani II

6. Kisangani II arose out of the desire of RPA to take Kapalata, which, however, lay within the UPDF area of control, as per the sectorization agreement.

7. RPA started its schemes by instigating their protégé RCD (Goma) to clamour for the removal of UPDF from Kapalata, claiming that it used to be a training camp for the police and UPDF dispositions at Kapalata and Lubutu-Bwafwasende junction on 5 May 2000 which were successfully repulsed by UPDF.

8. The leaders of both Uganda and Rwanda and the United Nations Security Council delegation led by Richard Holbrooke agreed to a ceasefire and demilitarization of Kisangani on 8 May 2000 at Rwakitura.

9. This was followed by the Mwanza talks of 14 May 2000 between the Presidents of Rwanda and Uganda, who also agreed on demilitarization. The force commanders of both armies made a joint statement on 15 May 2000 to give effect to the resolution of demilitarization. An execution order was also signed by the two force commanders in Kigali on 21 May 2000 to implement the demilitarization.

10. It was agreed that the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) should deploy its officers to effect the demilitarization and Kisangani was zoned for purposes of demilitarization, which was to be in phases.

11. Kisangani II therefore boils down to attempts by RPA to take Kapalata, Lubutu-Bwafwasende junction and Bangoka Airport.

12. RPA even reinforced their company at Bangoka Airport to battalion strength and assaulted the UPDF company at Bangoka three times without success.

Hurdles during demilitarization in the aftermath of Kisangani II and causes of Kisangani III

13. Two UPDF officers and four supporting staff who were supposed to be part of the Joint Command Centre (JCC) in Kisangani in keeping with the execution order reported late for reasons beyond their control or that of UPDF.

14. The airports in Kisangani had been unilaterally declared out of use by RPA except for United Nations planes. This compelled UPDF to re-route its officers for JCC through Buta and then by road to Kisangani, which resulted in their delay.

15. UPDF forces from La-Forestierre and Bangoka Airport were to withdraw to Bafwasende according to the execution order, while the RPA forces at Bangoka Airport and Lubutu-Bafwasende junction were to withdraw to Lubutu.

16. UPDF requested to move part of its equipment and personnel from Bangoka Airport and La-Forestierre to Banalia instead of Bafwasende, which was accepted by both MONUC and RPA.

17. The rest of the equipment and personnel were moved to Bafwasende as per the execution order.

18. Intermediate withdraw positions at Wanyarukula and Bengamisa were agreed upon between UPDF and RPA with the approval of MONUC.

19. RPA, however, subsequently circumvented this and withdrew just 24 km from Kisangani-Lubutu road.

20. Consequently, MONUC and UPDF received threats from RPA that it would return its equipment and personnel to Bangoka Airport and Lubutu-Bwafwasende junction because UPDF had not met the 0630 hrs deadline to move owing to unforeseen technical problems reported to and accepted by MONUC and JCC.

21. The UPDF, however, complied with and completed its phase I withdrawal obligations in accordance with the execution order.

22. In phase II, UPDF was to withdraw from La Camp Kapalata to Banalia, while RPA was to withdraw from Kisangani city and Sim Sim Airport to Ubundu.

23. Before commencement of phase II, the RPA made unreasonable demands that UPDF should withdraw first and at night, which were unacceptable to UPDF but consistent with the treachery of RPA.

24. In the morning of 5 June 2000, the UPDF communicated to MONUC its readiness to deploy the force that was to form part of the joint deployment in Kisangani and Kapalata.

25. The RPA, however, hit a UPDF vehicle which was coming from Bangoka Airport, where it had taken supplies to UPDF troops the same day.

26. The UPDF position at Kapalata also came under attack. All this forced UPDF to take self-defence measures, including the securing of Tshopo Bridge and establishment of a defence at Sotexki junction.

27. RPA continued shelling and making futile attacks on these UPDF dispositions, and destroyed the power station on Tshopo River from tactical bases they had established amid civil built-up areas.

28. Uganda remains committed to the Lusaka Peace Accord and subsequent agreements because the two dimensions to the conflict are adequately answered within the framework of Lusaka, that is, the internal question and the security concerns of neighbours.

29. The full implementation of the Agreement has, however, mainly been bogged down by lack of resources. The convening of the national dialogue had also been delayed owing to disagreement over the choice of the facilitator, which fortunately was resolved with the appointment of His Excellency Sir Ketumire Masire in January 2000.

30. The Joint Military Commission (JMC) is constrained by lack of funds and it observed as much at its meeting held on 8 and 9 June 2000 in Lusaka.

31. It has, however, along with MONUC, worked out a plan which was adopted by the Political Committee for the disengagement and redeployment of forces in Congo, let alone presenting a draft proposal for the disarmament, demobilization, resettlement, and reintegration process which the Political Committee is to consider.

32. JMC has also deployed its officers in Boende, Kabinda, Lisala and Kabalo.

33. Therefore, with the support of the international community and the parties to the conflict, implementation of the ceasefire agreement will be seriously undertaken and accomplished.